

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GANSKE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING OZARKS SOLDIERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, in the last few days, beginning on Saturday, two individuals from my congressional district gave their lives in Afghanistan: one, a 34-year-old warrant officer in Special Forces; another, a 31-year-old sergeant, both of whom had clearly dedicated their lives and, in so many ways, dedicated their own families to protecting our freedoms and protecting our country.

As I was thinking about what I wanted to say today about them on the House floor, I read an editorial from a Springfield, Missouri, newspaper yesterday; and I think I would like to just enter that editorial in the RECORD and share it today as we think about the fact that we honor these men and women and the others who are putting their lives in harm's way for us.

Let me share that material with the Speaker and the Members here and then enter it fully in the RECORD. The editorial starts out: "From the beginning of the war in Afghanistan, President Bush has warned Americans to be prepared for casualties. Now we have them, and the pain of this war has been felt in the Ozarks. It has taken two of our neighbors: Chief Warrant Officer Stanley Harriman. Sergeant Philip J. Svitak.

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"Harriman, a Strafford High School graduate, was the first American to die in the ground offensive on al Qaeda and Taliban strongholds in eastern Afghanistan. Svitak, of Joplin, was among the seven soldiers killed in incidents involving two American helicopters.

"They are not faceless casualties. They were flesh-and-blood men who touched others in their hometowns. Harriman was described as soft-hearted,

sensitive to the suffering of others, yet a fierce competitor on the football or baseball field. Svitak was an only child who wanted to be like his parents, who both served in the Navy in the 1960s. Each leaves a wife and two young children.

"Harriman and Svitak were devoted to the Army and their country. 'Stanley died for you and you and you,' his wife, Sheila Harriman, told reporters at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 'and for your freedom. All Stanley ever wanted to do was be an American soldier.'

"Both soldiers knew the dangers of their jobs. Both knew that by making the military their career, they could be asked to put their lives on the line for their country at any time.

"Roseann Svitak said her son 'told me before he went, Mom, the terrorists have to be stopped.' He said, 'If they send me over there and anything happens to me, I am proud to die for my country.'

"Both men were sent. Both died, leaving friends, family, children to grieve and remember. They join John Willett and Craig Amundson, Ozarks natives who died in the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington. They are, for us in southwest Missouri, the faces of this war.

"Six months after those attacks, the Nation has largely returned to life as normal. Networks seek to reduce news programming to make room for more entertainment. Crash reality shows move back up in the ratings. Politicians again plot for their advantage.

"Yet the war continues, not a mop-up action but a full-scale assault. Our neighbors are on the front line. Our neighbors are dying. That ultimate sacrifice ought to mean something. The politicians will tell us it is in defense of liberty, and they are right. But it is up to us to decide what we will do with this liberty. Will we use it to keep the government honest, to be aware of what is happening in the rest of the world, to assure all Americans equal opportunity? Or will we use it to pay more attention to contestants on Survivor than soldiers in Afghanistan?

"Ozarkers are dying for freedom. How will we honor their sacrifice?"

[From the Springfield News Leader, Mar. 6, 2002]

HOW WILL WE HONOR OZARKS SOLDIERS?

Harriman and Svitak died fighting for our freedom.

From the beginning of the war in Afghanistan, President Bush has warned Americans to be prepared for casualties. Now we have them, and the pain of this war has been felt in the Ozarks. It has taken two more of our neighbors:

Chief Warrant Officer Stanley Harriman.
Sgt. Philip J. Svitak.

Harriman, a Strafford High School graduate, was the first American to die in the ground offensive on al-Qaida and Taliban strongholds in eastern Afghanistan. Svitak, of Joplin, was among the seven soldiers killed in incidents involving two American helicopters.

They are not faceless casualties. They were flesh-and-blood men who touched others in their hometowns. Harriman was described as

soft-hearted, sensitive to the suffering of others, yet a fierce competitor on the football or baseball field. Svitak was an only child who wanted to be like his parents, who both served in the Navy in the 1960s.

Each leaves a wife and two young children.

Harriman and Svitak were devoted to the Army and their country. "Stanley died for you and you and you," his wife, Sheila Harriman, told reporters at Fort Bragg, NC, "and for your freedom. All Stanley ever wanted to do was be an American soldier."

Both soldiers knew the dangers of their jobs. Both knew that by making the military their career, they could be asked to put their lives on the line for their country at any time.

Roseann Svitak said her son "told me before he went, 'Mom, the terrorists have to be stopped.' He said, 'if they send me over there and anything happens to me . . . I'm proud to die for my country.'"

Both men were sent. Both died, leaving friends, family, children to grieve and remember.

They join John Willett and Craig Amundson, Ozarks natives who died in the Sept. 11 attacks on New York and Washington. They are, for us in southwest Missouri, the faces of this war.

Six months after those attacks, the nation has largely returned to life as normal. Networks seek to reduce news programming to make room for more entertainment. Crash reality shows move back up in the ratings. Politicians again plot for their advantage.

Yet the war continues, not a mop-up action but a full-scale assault. Our neighbors are on the front line. Our neighbors are dying.

That ultimate sacrifice ought to mean something. The politicians will tell us it is in defense of liberty, and they are right. But it is up to us to decide what we will do with this liberty. Will we use it to keep government honest, to be aware of what is happening in the rest of the world, to assure all Americans equal opportunity? Or will we use it to pay more attention to contestants on "Survivor" than soldiers in Afghanistan.

Ozarkers are dying for freedom. How will we honor their sacrifice?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATSON of California addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ASSISTING VETERANS WITH PRESCRIPTION DRUG COPAYMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues in this House to sign on to a bill which I have introduced, H.R. 2820. H.R. 2820 is a bill that would help our veterans.

In the early part of February, 2002, a decision was made to increase the prescription co-payment for veterans from \$2 a prescription to \$7 a prescription. To me this is an unacceptable action and it hurts our veterans, many of whom live on fixed incomes and simply cannot absorb this increased cost.